MULTITUDINOUS ENIGMATIC CETACEANS, OR *"WHALES IN LIMBO"*

Part 4 in a 7 part series.

by Darren Naish

Unavoidably, cryptozoology is a narrow-minded science, for it is concerned almost solely with the mere identity of animals that people have seen. Its icons are typically creatures that, if real, are totally unique in the modern fauna. This contrasts with, say, a sighting of an unusual cetacean, an animal belonging to a group already consisting of almost 80 recognised living species. In this article I have attempted to review some of the more notable (and therefore better known) cryptocetaceans of which I am at present aware, and make conclusions on their possible identification and/or validity.

As will be explored in a future article, field identification and specific identity amongst known cetaceans is already a messy business, and many of the sightings alluded to here highlight the difficulties inherent in poor sighting records. However, do not despair. A number of the cetaceans reported here are so odd that they cannot be confused with anything else. If records of these animals truly represent a reality, they also reveal new diversity amongst living cetaceans.

A diversity of fins

The existence of, let us say, a sperm whale with a tall dorsal fin would indeed prove this point. Such an animal has indeed been seen. Like several other apparently new species discussed in this article, this animal is already well known in the cryptozoological community. Seen off the Shetland Islands in the 17th century, apparently several times, it was described by cetological pioneer Sir Robert Sibbald in 1692 [1]. It was of great size - apparently 15 m long (the biggest authenticated sperm whale bulls reach 18 or 19 m).

Sibbald commented upon the fact that teeth were present solely in the lower jaw, and though sperm whales are unmistakable animals in any case, this observation further shows that the animal was a sperm whale of some kind. Exactly how Sibbald came to be sure of this dentition I am not sure, as sperm whales' teeth are only visible at close range, and obviously only if the animal is lifting its head and opening its jaw. Carl von Linne, the great taxonomist, was obviously impressed enough with Sibbald's sperm whale to include it in his catalogue of organisms, the *Systema Naturae* (first published in 1758) [2]. He treated it as a species and gave it the name *Physeter tursio* - 'sperm whale dolphin': the 'dolphin' alluding to the similarity of fin structure to that of dolphins. Fig. 1 is a highly conjectural restoration of this animal.

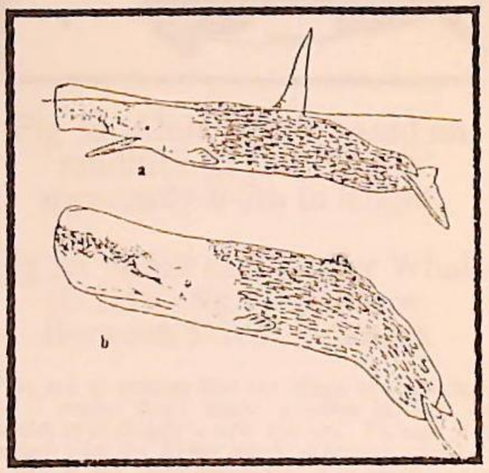

Fig. 1a. The conjectural restoration of *Physeter tursio*. 15m long in life.

Fig 1b. Adult male *P.catadon* for comparison. 18m - 19m long in life.

A possibility is that *Physeter tursio* is not a species, but was perhaps an abnormal individual. A dolphin with two dorsal fins was recorded from the coast of Cornwall in 1857 [3], but that it was amongst a school of otherwise normal animals strongly suggests a deformity (more about two-finned cetaceans in a moment!). However, it is hard to explain exactly why a sperm whale would accidentally end up with a tall dorsal fin as an abnormality. Other such external features, including tails in humans and external hind limbs in sperm whales can always

be explained as expression of an ancestral character still 'hidden' in the genome. Nobody knows if *Physeter* has the genetic 'memory' to generate such a dorsal fin, but if it does we may have an alternative theory.

More remarkable still are, as mentioned above, those cetaceans that would seem to have two dorsal fins! Michel Raynal, working in one case with Jean-Pierre Sylvestre [4], has already [5] reviewed reports of such cetaceans. Consequently, I will not analyse the area in depth.

Raynal and Sylvestre began by eliminating the confusion caused by a 'monstrous fish' (bearing two dorsal fins), reported by Mongitore to have stranded on the Sicilian coast in September 1741. Mongitore illustrated this animal - quite certainly inaccurately - and it bears scant resemblance to any cetacean. Treating it as such, however, in a publication from 1814, the French-American naturalist Constantine Samuel Rafinesque-Schmalz thought it to be a two-finned cetacean and named it *Oxypterus mongitori*. Raynal and Sylvestre regard the account as too vague to be useful, and I agree with them that the Sicilian animal was probably a large shark. In his 1989 book, *There are Giants in the Sea* [6], Michael Bright was obviously unaware of the original account of *'Oxypterus'*, and erroneously refers to it as a 'twin-dorsal-finned black-and-white spotted dolphin', which it clearly was not.

In fact, Bright had confused *'Oxypterus'* with other animals, this time ones that do indeed appear to be two-finned cetaceans [7]. Perhaps the best-known of all cryptocetaceans - one even appears on the front cover of the magazine Exotic Zoology - these were apparently seen between Hawaii and Australia by the French naturalists Jean-Rene Constant Quoy and Joseph Paul Gaimard in 1819 [10]. They described and illustrated them (fig. 2) as being about double the size of a porpoise [11], marked with black and white spots, and with two curved dorsal fins, one set just behind the head. It would seem that they were viewed at close range, for some length of time, and furthermore by many of the crew members [10]. Quoy and Gaimard named their new dolphins *Delphinus rhinoceros*.

Having myself seen video footage where several dolphins gel together and create what appears to be a large multi-finned animal [12], I think it is tempting to speculate that such an explanation lies behind, at the very least, aboriginal myths of multi-finned cetaceans [13], as Raynal himself has also noted [5].

Quoy and Gaimard's sighting, however, is too precise to allow for such a possibility. Taking their accounts at face value, they clearly depict an unknown cetacean: one that must also represent a new genus of dolphin. In accordance with this, Raynal and Sylvestre have proposed the name *Cetodipterus* [4].

What would appear to be another two-finned cetacean, but this time a mysticete, has also been thoroughly discussed by Raynal and Sylvestre [4,5]. Following his sighting of this animal between Peru and Chile in 1867, the Italian naturalist Enrico Hillyer Giglioli named it *Amphiptera pacifica* [14]. Giglioli's extremely competent illustration (on which fig. 2b is based) eliminates the need for description. *Amphiptera* is clearly remarkable. Such an animal would deserve its own genus, and Giglioli's own suggestion that the balaenopterid subfamily *Amphipterinae* be created for it seems entirely reasonable to me. Sightings of what would seem to be other specimens of *Amphiptera* have been reported [15], one even from 1983 [16].

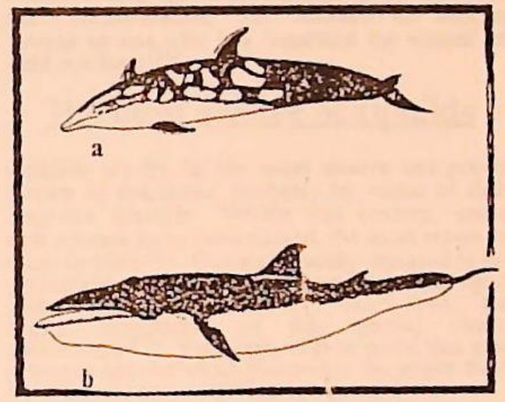

Fig 2a. A moderately speculative rendition of Quoy and Gainard's two finned *Delphinus rhinoceros*. In life length would be 4-5m.

Fig 2b. Giglioli's *Amphiptera pacifica*, an 18m long baleen whale; unlike rorquals, it lacks throat grooves and has two dorsal fins.

As will become evident in the rest of this article, the majority of cryptocetaceans are, by cetacean standards, small. Joining *Physeter tursio* and

Amphiptera, however, are two large cryptic forms of right whale (family Balaenidae), both from the Arctic. For reasons of space, however, they will be discussed elsewhere, as will the cryptic whales of the Southern Hemisphere. These include yet another tall-finned toothed whale, a variety of monodonts [17], and a grey and black dolphin probably related to Risso's dolphin (*Grampus griseus*). A preliminary analysis of what may be another cryptocetacean, that seen by Sir Peter Scott in the Magellan Straits, has already been presented [18,19].

Morzer Bruyns and his cryptocetaceans

Ironically the best known of all mystery cetaceans, more doubts are entertained as to the validity of the following four species than for any others. These animals are described in a popular book written by W.F.J Morzer Bruyns in 1971 [20], and as such are generally more accessible then obscure papers and research notes. They are well known in the cryptozoological community as all four are included in Heuvelmans' 1986 checklist of cryptids [8].

Morzer Bruyns made important observations on whales the world over, many of which are of interest to cryptozoologists, and was bold enough to present his four 'unknowns' as potential new species. He even gave them species names, albeit rather makeshift ones.

1) The Alula whale. This is a large orca-like dolphin, sepia brown, but marked with star-shaped scars, apparently seen by Morzer Bruyns in the eastern Gulf of Aden.

He describes it as 6-7 m long and perhaps 1800 kg in weight. It has a rounded head 'similar but not quite as round as in Globicephala [the pilot whales]', and a prominent orca-like dorsal fin (fig. 3).

Importantly, Morzer Bruyns reports that several other officers besides himself watched one of these whales from their ship; a number of them made sketches, and later a painting was prepared. It would also seem that Alula whales were seen by Morzer Bruyns and his crew on more than one occasion, and also that more than one whale was seen at a time. On one occasion it is reported that the whales were seen to pursue a school of smaller dolphins, and furthermore, 'devouring of live whales by predators in this area was witnessed'. The predators doing the devouring could not be identified, but the inference is that they were Alula whales.

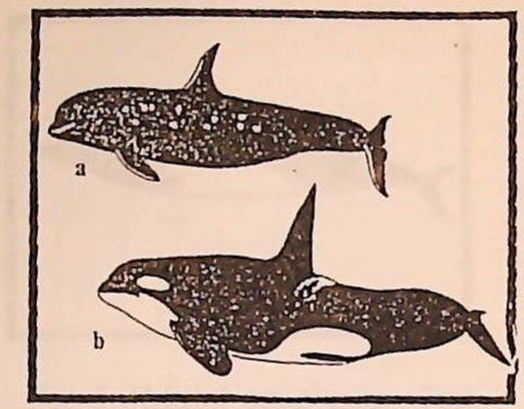

Fig 3a. Alula Whale based on rendition in (20). In life apparently 6-7m in length.

Fig 3b. Adult male Killer Whale (*O.orca*) for comparison. Between 8-10m in length.

If we are to assume that the Alula whale is real, and I really don't know whether or not we should, it is clearly a new species. Perhaps it is enough like the Killer whale (*Orcinus orca*) to belong in the same genus [21]: it is clearly very much like that species in its morphology and behaviour. It is interesting that colour variants of the Killer whale could, conceivably, be regarded as 'new' whales when seen: to my knowledge, however, all such variants have always been identified correctly. Watson reports the existence of all-black killer whales [22], and all-white individuals have been seen several times [23] (in 1970, one was captured for British Columbia's 'Sealand of the Pacific'. Called 'Chimo', it lived for 2 years [24,25]. Other variants of Orcinus will be discussed in the next article in this series. However, the existence of aberrant orcas is irrelevant to the identity of the Alula whale: it is distinct from them.

2) The Greek dolphin. Of all living cetaceans, the small dolphins of the genus *Stenella* have been the biggest headache for taxonomists. Five living species are currently recognised [27], but a bewildering variety of morphs and hybrids amongst these species ensure that some confusion remains.

Furthermore, if Morzer Bruyns is right, there are another two species of this genus awaiting description! The 'Greek dolphin' is one of these: Morzer Bruyns claims to have seen it on several occasions, and says that it is very much like the Striped dolphin (*S. coeruleoalba*) but without the distinctive black stripes [26]. Though there is quite some variation in the pigmentation and patterning of Striped dolphins, nowhere else have they been said, to my knowledge, to ever lack the eye-to-anus stripe.

3) The Senegal dolphin. This is Morzer Bruyns' second as-yet-unknown Stenella species. He described it as differing slightly from the pantropical spotted dolphin (*S. attenuata*), the cosmopolitan one of the two known spotted Stenella species. As anyone who has seen the things in the field will know, differentiating the two species of spotted dolphins in the wild can be very difficult, and identifying a third form where two already occur (as they do, as it happens, off the Atlantic coast of Africa) is, in my opinion, beyond the data ordinarily available. While the idea that new species of spotted dolphin may exist out there amongst the presently recognised 'species' of spotted dolphin is a fair possibility, given the very broad variation already known to be present in these species, I do not believe it reasonable to recognise a distinct form, viewed only in the field, as representative of a new species.

This does not necessarily mean that Morzer Bruyns is incorrect - it does, however, show that his distinctions may be on shaky ground.

4) The Illigan dolphin. This is perhaps the most remarkable of the cetaceans Morzer Bruyns claims to have seen, this time in the Mindanao Sea, amongst the Philippines. It has a brown back, yellow flanks, a pink belly and, most interestingly, appears to be very similar in size and shape to the Melon-headed whale (*Peponocephala electra*).

As Heuvelmans has observed [8], it is particularly noteworthy that Morzer Bruyns seems to have been aware of a Peponocephala-like whale before Peponocephala itself was deemed to be truly distinct from other dolphins. As Morzer Bruyns did not publish these observations until after Peponocephala was described as a new genus [28] however, the best piece of supporting evidence is void!

I also find it hard to believe in a very brightly coloured dolphin when all of its closest relatives (either the killer whale - pilot whale group [29], or the Lagenorhynchus species) are always marked in blacks, whites and greys.

However, there is no real reason why an Illigan dolphin cannot exist. But what are we to make of Morzer Bruyns and his claimed sightings? Besides having supposedly encountered the four cetacean species discussed above - all as yet unseen by other cetologists - Morzer Bruyns also writes of several sightings of unidentified ziphiids - beaked whales, including a rust-brown species seen in the Gulf of Aden. Then there is a 'South China Sea dolphin' and a 'Malacca dolphin': animals that, Morzer Bruyns suggests, may be similar to Fraser's dolphin (*Lagenodelphis hosei*) - yet again, an animal unknown from complete specimens at the time of Morzer Bruyns' purported observations [20,30].

Short of accusing Morzer Bruyns of fabricating evidence, I am totally unsure as to how seriously we should regard his accounts. Stephen Leatherwood, the world authority on cetacean field identification, has referred to Morzer Bruyns as one who has 'muddied the waters' of field cetology [31].

The most elusive of ziphiids

Ziphiids are by far the most elusive and poorly known of cetaceans, probably by virtue of their deep-sea lifestyle. Within this century, seven new species have been named, the most recent of these in 1991 [32]. Currently hardly reported in the zoological press is another new species, again from the eastern Pacific [33]. As I write, the formal description of this species awaits publication [34]. Yet again, here is proof that new cetacean species await discovery. So might there be other unknown ziphiids out there? [35].

Again as of writing, Longman's beaked whale (*Mesoplodon [=Indopacetus] pacificus*) has been described solely on the basis of skeletal remains [36]. We just don't know what the complete animal, dead or alive, looks like. This has led to some interesting speculations, as there are several ziphiid sighting records that do not match known species: might these have been live specimens of Longman's beaked whale?

For example, Mark Carwardine reports that two large mesoplodonts were seen, by 'experienced observers', in waters around the Seychelles in 1980 [37]. These animals agreed in size and morphology with what is known of Longman's beaked whale (namely, two skulls) and were light grey. Their appearance was reconstructed in 1995 [38] and appears as fig. 4 here. Another suggestion is that the rust-brown ziphiids seen by Morzer Bruyns in the Gulf of Aden may themselves have been Longman's beaked whales

as may have been a group of large ziphiids photographed near Christmas Island [27].

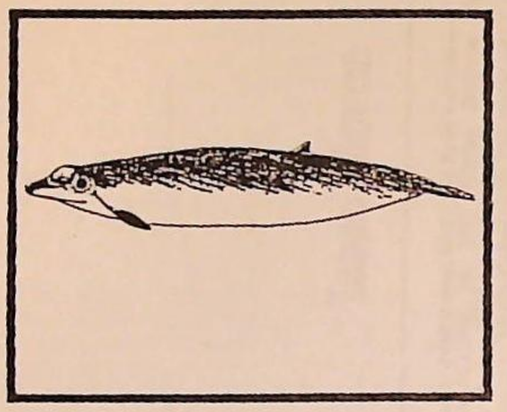

Fig 4. Restored appearance of ziphiid seen off the Seychelles in 1980. Based on [38].

Presently the most widely reported of all cryptocetaceans is that reported by Pitman, Aguayo and Urban in 1987 [39].

This animal agrees in morphology with known mesoplodonts and is notable for occurring in two distinct colour morphs that, on occasion, have been seen together. One is larger, has a broad whitish band sweeping diagonally from behind the head to the tailstock (fig. 5) and displays numerous scratches
and scars.

These are typical of male mesoplodonts which, unlike the females and juveniles, have protruding teeth and seem to use them in fights with other males. It can therefore be deduced that this form is the male. It has several times been seen associated with a second, less distinctive, uniform grey-brown animal.

Probably female, this second form can only really be identified as the same species as the 'male' when it is seen together with it. Indeed Pitman and colleagues write: 'The brown animals are relatively nondescript and separating them from other mesoplodonts in the field may not be possible' [39].

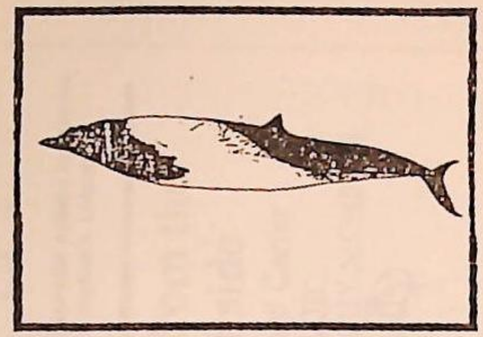

Fig 5. 'Male' specimen of an unidentified ziphiid seen and photographed in the eastern Pacific. In life 5-5.5m in length. Based on illustrations and photographs in [39] and illustration on pp.112-3 of [37].

As regards the absolute identity of this animal, three possibilities exist. Firstly, it may be a brand new species and, if so, as it has been photographed and seen on more occasions than certain mesoplodonts which are known from specimens, it is now certainly the best documented. It is even included in both recently published popular [37] and technical [27] field guides. Secondly, it may be a race of an already known mesoplodont, in which case we are dealing with a new subspecies. I consider this unlikely, but it remains a possibility (two other poorly known but morphologically distinct mesoplodonts - Hubbs' (*M. carlhubbsi*) and Andrews' beaked whales (M. bowdoini) - are considered by some experts to be subspecies of the same species.

Thirdly, this may be an already known species, but one not yet positively identified alive, or known from material other than a skull. Here we return to Longman's beaked whale. That this species has only been recorded with certainty from Queensland and Somalia does not rule out the possibility of it occurring in the east Pacific: ziphiid species are notorious for stranding miles away from their expected ranges. The best example of this is probably Gray's Beaked Whale (*Mgrayi*). This seems to be a southern form, with a number of strandings restricted to the latitudes of New Zealand, Tierra Del Fuego and South Africa.

In 1927 however, a specimen stranded at Kijkduin in the Netherlands! It is not therefore inconceivable that Longman's Beaked Whales might be frequently observed off the west coast of Central America. However a true disclaiming characteristic might be size: the Pacific species is small (5 - 5.5 m) whereas Longman's is large (7 - 7.5 m, this length extrapolated from the skulls).

Further complications arise in view of suggestions that (1) the Seychelles whales, or (2) the Gulf of Aden whales, or (3) the Christmas Island whales, were themselves Longman's beaked whales, for if any of them are, the Pacific form must be something else again. Conversely, if the Pacific form is Longman's beaked whale, then the Seychelles, Gulf of Aden and Christmas Island beaked whales will still be unidentified, and all we will know is that they are not specimens of *Mesoplodon pacificus*. (Add to all this the fact that other as-yet-unidentified ziphiids have been referred to in the literature.)

Finally, it is even possible that the new Chilean beaked whale may be something to do with Pitman et al's form. Publication of the description will reveal whether such a speculation is valid [34].

Less obviously, but still most likely, ziphiids were the 9 m long whales watched by famous nineteenth century naturalist Philip Gosse. He described animals with elongate bodies - black dorsally, white ventrally - with white pectoral fins and long pink-tipped snouts [40]. Taken at face value, his account most certainly describes an unknown cetacean and, reconstructed with a mesoplodont body as template (fig. 6), this is rather obvious. With no other recorded sightings, let alone specimens or photos, this animal's purported existence remains, like others we have seen, in limbo and, at this stage, nothing more can be said.

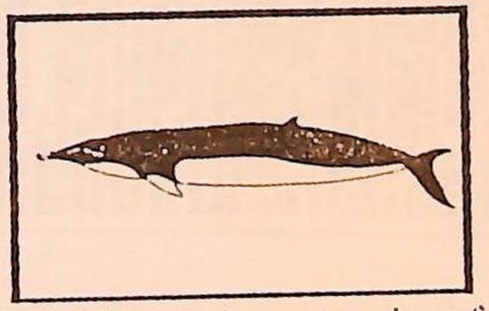

Fig 6. A tentative restoration of the 9m long ziphiid apparently seen by Gosse in the North Atlantic.

The cryptocetaceans only touched on in this article, as well as others, will be presented in another article.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Michel Raynal for his help and interest in my work, and to Alexandre Zerbini for literature on new ziphiids and monodonts. Thanks also to Richard Ellis for discussion of poorly known ziphiids, to Richard Muirhead for his uncovery of obscure documents, to Jon Downes for access to CFZ archives, and to Stephen Leatherwood for comments. As always, thanks also to my friends Ben Roeach and John Moore for interminable discussions, helpful comments and a constant stream of literature. This article is dedicated to the memory of Boba Fett the budgie.

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7. Erroneous association of 'Oxyperus' with Quoy and Gaimard's rhinocerous dolphin also occurs on p. 5 of ref 8 and p. 36 of ref 9.
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11. Unfortunately, we do not know if they were referring to true porpoises (*Phocoena phocoena*), or to dolphins, for whom the name porpoise has often been used. Either way, it makes little difference to the approximate size of the two-finned species.
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14. GIGLIOLI, H H. 1870. *Note Intorno la Distribuzione della Fauna Vertebrata nell'Oceano Prese Durante un Viaggio Intorno al Globo 1865-68.* Giuseppe Civelli (Florence)
15. p 364 of ref 9.
16. MAIGRET, J. 1986. *Les cetaces sur les cotes ouest-africaines: encore quelques enigmes!* Notes Africaines 189: 20-24. An Amphipteru-like beast is described in this article. See also comments in ref 5.
17. 'Monodonts' are belugas, narwhals and their extinct relatives. An article devoted to cryptic monodonts will be published elsewhere.
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19. I presently think it most likely that Scott's dolphins were specimens of *Cephalorhynchus eutropia* after all.
20. MORZER BRUYNS, W.F.J. 1971. *Field Guide of Whales and Dolphins*, Mees (Amsterdam)
21. Sylvestre has gone further than this, and both includes the Alula whale in his entry on Orcinus orca, and refers to it as a 'sort of killer whale' (pp 125-126) In SYLVESTRE, J-P. 1993. *Dolphins and Porpoises: A Worldwide Guide*. Sterling (New York)
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23. A remarkable 74 records of all-white or mostly white killer whales, seen between 1923 and 1959, are listed in CARL, G C. 1960. Albinistic killer whales in British Columbia. Prov. Mus. Nat. Hist. Anthrop. Rep. 1959: 1-8
24. HOYT, E. 1990 *Orca: The Whale Called Killer*. Robert Hale (London). 'Chimo's' capture, medical problems and death are discussed on pp 115-122. Worthy of note is that all of the orcas in "Chimo's" pod were malformed in some way: Hoyt mentions speculations that they may have been a team of rejects that had teamed up together.
25. COUSTEAU, J-Y and DIOLE, P. 1972. *The Whale: Mighty Monarch of the Sea*. Cassell (London). Photos of an 'albino killer whale of the Juan de Fuca Strait (near Seattle)' are included on pp 232-233. Ellis [p 169 of ref 26] notes that *'the circumstances under which the animal was photographed are not clearly explained'*. The whale is probably the same as 'Chimo': Hoyt [p. 117 of ref 24] mentions Cousteau's interest in 'Chimo' and Seattle is in close proximity to Victoria, the location of 'Sealand'
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27. JEFFERSON, T.A. LEATHERWOOD, S and WEBBER, M.A. 1993. *Marine mammals of the world*. FAO (Rome)
28. NISHIWAKI, M and NORRIS, K. 1966. *A new genus Peponocephala for the odontocete cetacean species Electra electra*. Sci. Rep. Whales Res. Ist. 20: 95-100
29. In 1866 Grey recognised this group as a family distinct from other dolphins and named it Globicephalidae. Some cetologists today recognise this group while others treat it as a subfamily of the Delphinidae. Still others reject it, believing the different globicephalids to be independently derived. I am unaware of any good characters that prove its monophyly.
30. *Lagenodelphis hosei* was described from skeletal material in 1956. FRASER, F.C. 1956. A new Sarawak dolphin. Sarawak Mus. Jour. 7: 478-503. Specimens in their entirety began turning up in 1971, revealing for the first time the external appearance of this species. Two papers were published in 1973: PERRIN et al. Rediscovery of Fraser's dolphin (*Lagenodelphis hosei*). Nature 241: 345-350. TOBAYAMA et. al. *Records of the Fraser's Sarawak dolphin in the western North Pacific*. Sci. Rep. Whales Res. Inst. 25: 251-363
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33. Van WAERBEEK, K. 1996 *New beaked whale off Chile*. Marine Mammal Society Newsletter 4 (2): 3
34. According to ref 33, publication will be in REYES, J, Van WAERBEEK, K, CARDENAS, J-C and YANEZ, J. Boletin del Museoi Nacional de Historia Natural de Chile. It will be written in English.
35. An unabridged discussion of cryptic ziphiids will be published in The Cryptozoology Review.
36. LONGMAN, H.A. 1926. New records of Cetacea. Mem. Queensland Mus. 8: 266-278

19. I presently think it most likely that Scott's dolphins w
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38. Illustration by Martin Camm on pp 134-135 of ref 37
39. PITMAN, R.L, AGUAYO, A and URBAN, J 1987. *Observations of an unidentified beaked whale (Mesoplodon sp) in the eastern tropical Pacific*. Marine Mammal Science. 3:345-352.
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Letter from the Lochside

by Richard Carter

'LIZZIE':
THE LOCH LOCHY MONSTER

'Lizzie' of Loch Lochy was seen on 11 September by staff and guests of the Corriecour Lodge Hotel situated on the shore of Loch Lochy. Sandra Turner who was working in the hotel dining room saw three large dark humps about one mile away.

Joined by Kate Allan they, together with 16 guests, watched the object move in what they both described as an unusual manner. The tail end whipped from side to side very fast; the front end was large and rounded and it moved as fast as a dinghy. Both gave the size as about the same as a dolphin but it became obvious it could not be, by its side to side movement.

Dolphins were reported in Loch Linnhe, the sea loch, but this is separated by the canal locks. Sandra Fraser made inquiries around the Loch and one or two local fishermen had reported unusual wakes in the last couple of days.

The sighting ended when the three humps moved out of sight. No-one else from around the Loch reported seeing anything strange.